

**Testimony from Kate D. Brody, Chair of the Barrington School Committee
In opposition to House Bill 7095
February 26, 2014**

Good evening Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Health Education and Welfare Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 7095.

My name is Kate Brody and I am the Chair of the Barrington School Committee.

The Barrington School Committee, with a 4-1 majority vote in January, passed a resolution in support of the Common Core State Standards and for the adoption and continued implementation of these standards in the Barrington Public Schools. I have provided your committee with a copy of that resolution.

It is critical that the responsibility for ensuring successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards remain at the local level. Education leaders at the local level have the expertise to determine how to best develop curricula and hone instructional practices that align to and enrich the Common Core State Standards for the unique needs of their students. I urge you to defer to the local level to meet this challenge and maximize student growth and achievement.

It is important to note that the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessment are two different entities. The Common Core defines the standards and the PARCC assessment provides one measure with which to evaluate student progress relative to the standards.

Administrators and teachers in the Barrington Public Schools are invested in the success of the Common Core State Standards. They have invested countless hours of their time in robust professional development and I can assure you that we are fully committed to supporting their curricula work. The Barrington School Committee has made a substantial investment of capital and resources in ongoing curricula development, alignment, implementation and evaluation and we take very seriously our responsibility for the strong educational stewardship for our students as well as the strong financial stewardship for Barrington taxpayers.

It is difficult to understand how enactment of this legislation would support the accountability of local education districts relative to the investment that has been made since 2010 in education. The Common Core State Standards were designed to give local districts control over the individual needs of their own students. This legislation would take away that local control and could jeopardize the educational needs of our students.

The Barrington School Committee believes that the status quo has served neither students in the Barrington Public Schools, nor in the state of Rhode Island, well and we need to abandon incremental change for our students. We made a strategic decision in Rhode Island almost four years ago to move forward with clear and ambitious standards and high expectations for all students. The creation of a commission may impede local curricula implementation efforts and we cannot afford to suspend or halt progress now. We owe it to our students, families, educators and communities to have the courage to do the hard work that is worth doing and continue to move forward to transform teaching and learning. It is about the future of public education for students who are counting upon us to be their advocates and champions.

We can learn from the success of education reform in Massachusetts: raise the standards, provide greater support, invest deeply in the quality of teaching and stay the course. This is a powerful and coherent strategy and our Rhode Island students deserve the same from us.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony before you this evening.

Kate D. Brody
Chair
Barrington School Committee